

Rainmaker Q&A: Crowell & Moring's Daniel Sasse

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Daniel A. Sasse, a partner at Crowell & Moring LLP in Irvine, California, focuses on antitrust litigation, government investigations and compliance issues. Sasse's practice includes defending clients in criminal investigations and civil litigation as well as representing many Fortune 500 companies as plaintiffs in recovery actions when they have been the victim of price-fixing cartels.



Daniel A. Sasse

In 2014, 2015 and 2016, Sasse was recognized as an "Up and Coming California Antitrust Attorney" by Chambers USA, noting that clients appreciate that he is "incredibly responsive" and "cerebral but also understands how businesses work in connection with litigation." He has also been recognized as one of the leading competition attorneys in the U.S. and listed in Global Competition Review's Who's Who Legal: Competition 2015.

As a leader in the firm's antitrust recovery practice, Sasse has helped clients recover more than \$500 million in recent years, and has helped turn legal departments from cost-centers into profit-centers.

Q: What skill was most important for you in becoming a rainmaker?

A: Problem solving and listening, which really go hand in hand. You have to be legitimately interested in helping your client. That means learning about their business, anticipating problems and helping them to solve their problems in creative and practical ways. War stories do not usually solve clients' problems, but listening to their problems and working hard to solve them is a recipe for success and new work. I know it is a good pitch meeting when the client has talked more than I have and we have started talking about solving their problem.

Q: How do you prepare a pitch for a potential new client?

A: I try to learn as much about the client's business as possible. It is often helpful to look at a client's competitors and consider whether we have done any work for the industry that may be relevant and helpful for the client. Second, we look to tell our client exactly how we would help them solve this case. We share substantive ideas, information on the judge in the current case, discuss a litigation plan, and present ideas on a budget. Diversity is also a must. We put together a diverse team of lawyers that can help share different perspectives and offer creative solutions. Our results are better and our clients expect it.

Q: Share an example of a time when landing a client was especially difficult, and how you handled it.

A: One frequent challenge to developing new business is when your client contact or the decision maker for hiring is different from the lawyer that is managing the case. Building trust among in-house counsel and working to keep them looking good internally is key to developing future business. It sounds obvious, but it is far more helpful and rewarding to help that counsel look good with his or her senior management, rather than trying to go over their head to manage the case or pitch for the next case.

Q: What should aspiring rainmakers focus on when beginning their law careers?

A: Invest in learning a client's business. It is also helpful to invest in internal rainmaking and developing experience at your firm. You want your own partners to hire you and consider you as a go-to source before you start marketing outside of the firm. Build networks in the firm and outside the firm. Marketing is far easier and more effective with your fellow partners. It is easier for a partner to talk about your success and experience than it is for you to talk about your own experience.

Follow up with clients when you are successful, and when you fail, find out what they think is effective, especially when decisions are made on substantive issues and not pricing. Finally — and most importantly — be resilient. Most of us are told no and fail at bringing in business far more often than we succeed. Especially early in your career, being told no just means you are in the game and getting better. You have to be appropriately persistent and keep trying.

Q: What's the most challenging aspect of remaining a rainmaker?

A: Managing time to have client contact in the midst of running cases. Developing business really requires constant attention and constant client contact. Of course, you must deliver results. But a key to developing new business is finding the next case and additional work even while you are busy. Making your clients look good and giving them practical advice are crucial. Thinking about your clients and their business even when you are not working on a big case for them is the difference in building real client relationships.

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